

ASTORIA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

City Council Chambers
August 15, 2016

ADC JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

A regular meeting of the Astoria Development Commission was held at the above place at the hour of 9:12 pm
Commissioners Present: Price, Herzig, Warr, Nemlowill, Mayor LaMear

Commissioners Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Community Development Director Cronin, Parks and Recreation Director Cosby, Finance Director Brooks, Fire Chief Ames, Police Chief Johnston, Public Works Director Cook, and City Attorney Henningsgaard. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS: No reports.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: No changes.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

The follow items were presented on the Consent Calendar:

- 5(a)ADC Minutes of 5/16/16
- 5(b)ADC Minutes of 6/6/16
- 5(c)ADC Minutes of 6/20/16

Commission Action: Motion by Commissioner Warr, seconded by Commissioner Nemlowill, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Commissioners Warr, Nemlowill, Herzig and Price, and Mayor LaMear. Nays: None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

Item 6(a): Astor West Urban Renewal District – Plan Amendment Study (Community Development)

The Astor West Urban Renewal Area (URA) was established by the Astoria Development Commission (ADC) in 2002 as an important catalyst for the Port of Astoria industrial area and Uniontown commercial district. The City Council established FY2015-16 goals to "develop a master plan for the western entrance to Astoria" and "promote positive economic development through strengthening partnerships." In addition, the City Council has expressed strong interest in reopening Bond Street to two-way traffic and facilitate revitalization of this key connecting street between the Uniontown and Downtown neighborhoods. On March 21, 2016, the ADC authorized staff to initiate a plan amendment study that would examine the boundary expansion options to include Bond Street and other key properties ripe for redevelopment. On August 1, 2016, staff provided a project update to ADC after a public open house that was held on July 28, 2016.

The City has mapped a proposed area, developed a potential project list of investments, initiated the public outreach phase, conducted an initial financial analysis of the maximum indebtedness ("credit card limit"), and developed an overall timeline for the project. The proposed expansion area has been slightly amended from the open house version to include a vacant commercial property at 75 W Marine Drive, which is a former gas station and car wash that had previously been environmentally contaminated, but remediated. A map of the proposed expansion area is attached. Included in the memorandum are lists of proposed projects that are being considered.

City Manager Estes said the projects listed in the memorandum were for budgeting purposes and the specific types of projects the City could take on were listed in the Urban Renewal Plan, which was emailed to City Council.

Director Cronin displayed a map of the area and said Staff proposed that the boundary be extended by one acre to include multiple properties. The old gas station/car wash is the only strategic property. It was remediated several years ago, but has remained vacant. The Urban Renewal District encourages the development of vacant properties, so Staff wants this property to be included in the District. In order to include the vacant property, the

adjacent commercial properties must be added as well. The boundary would have to be extended up to Marine Drive.

Commissioner Warr asked how the District would facilitate the development of the vacant property. Director Cronin said the District could provide a small grant for the property owner to do a feasibility study to determine what could be successful on that property. If the property owner presents the City with a proposal, Staff would work with the property owner to develop the proposal. If the proposal included a request for funds, the Development Commission would review the proposal.

Commissioner Herzig confirmed the location of the proposed boundary and asked why it would not be extended further to include more commercial properties. Director Cronin said the Commission needs to decide where the boundary should be located. Staff has proposed that the former brown field property be included in the District, but it is up to the Commission to draw the boundary. State statues would allow the City to add additional acreage. City Manager Estes added that the City has a limited area that can be added to each urban renewal district, so the City needs to be strategic about how much acreage is added now and plan for future growth. At the last meeting, Commissioner Herzig discussed the possibility of adding the old Astoria Ford site in the future. Rather than adding more than is necessary now, Staff has proposed this boundary so the City has additional flexibility in the future.

Commissioner Nemlowill asked why the boundary would not be extended farther north, which would be more consistent with the rest of the Urban Renewal District. Astoria Warehousing was discussed a lot during the Riverfront Visioning process. She revisited the discussions earlier that day and was unable to find anything specific, but the property has been discussed a lot. It is a valuable asset and a thriving business with roots to Astoria's canning days. That particular property could really benefit from the proposed façade improvement program, which would really benefit the community. The area also needs enhanced pedestrian crossings and Riverwalk improvements. Director Cronin said the boundary line has to be drawn somewhere and Staff took a conservative approach that provides opportunities along Marine Drive. However, it is up to the Commission to decide where the boundary should be. He did not believe there were many opportunities across Marine Drive other than a façade grant here and there. He was unsure if those properties could be successfully redeveloped over the next five to ten years. He would have to do more research and talk to Mr. Supple about his interest in that area.

Commissioner Nemlowill said she believed the additional research would be worthwhile.

Commissioner Warr believed Astoria Warehousing and the property was owned by a large successful Japanese firm and he did not believe they would want or accept urban renewal funds.

Commissioner Herzig understood the façade improvement grant was available throughout the City, not limited to the Urban Renewal District. Director Cronin explained that the expansion of the district and the creation of a Storefront Improvement Program, which would be presented to the Commission in September, were tied to urban renewal funds. Urban renewal funds cannot be used outside of the district's boundary. The City also has a small pot of money through the Certified Local Government Program that would be applied to some of the residential properties on Alameda and some historic buildings in Uniontown that would not be eligible for urban renewal funds. These funds will be used on residential properties to complement the investments being made on industrial and commercial properties.

Commissioner Warr asked why Staff wanted to extend the boundary to the east between 1st and 2nd Streets. Director Cronin said Staff wanted to make housing improvements along Bond Street and the biggest need starts at 2nd Street. City Manager Estes added that initially, the intent of the expansion was to include Bond Street for access and provide opportunities for housing improvements. However, if the Commission wants to focus on other areas, Staff can do so. The District has a maximum indebtedness, which is the total amount that can be spent before the district closes. Based on the financial projections, the City has about five or six more years before the District closes and the properties go back on the tax rolls at their full value. The maximum indebtedness could be increased, but through a process more complicated than the process used for the Astor East Urban Renewal District.

Commissioner Price confirmed the Bridge Vista Area extended up to 2nd Street. A couple of weeks ago, she had emailed City Manager Estes to suggest Staff create a chart of projects and timelines so the Commission could

see what was planned. She was disappointed that the City could not move forward with the Urban Core Area of the Riverfront Vision Plan because City Council had decided to focus on other projects, which put the Urban Core Area on the back burner. City Manager Estes had responded saying that Staff would present the Urban Core Area in September. City Manager Estes clarified that Department reports would be presented in September. The Community Development Department does not run off of project management charts because Staff needs to be more fluid. Political actions that impact projects cannot be planned for in advance. However, the Department can update City Council on their projects. Commissioner Price reiterated that seeing where the Department was at would be very useful to her.

Commissioner Herzig asked if removing the Conference Center from the project list would involve a contraction of the urban renewal district boundaries. Director Cronin said no, the existing boundary would remain, but removing the project from the list allows for the reallocation of funds to other projects. City Manager Estes added that the City can always contract an urban renewal district, but the City would not get an equal amount to use elsewhere. Director Cronin noted that while the Conference Center would be removed from the project list, other projects from the original 2002 Plan would remain, as well as newly proposed projects.

Commissioner Herzig believed the boundary proposed by Staff made a lot of sense.

Director Cronin confirmed he would forward the Commission's direction to the consultants, so they can finalize the draft plan. The plan and a report will be presented to the Commission on October 3rd and Staff will request a first reading in November. Staff will also conduct an open house and the Planning Commission will review the plan before it is formally adopted.

The Astoria Development Commission recessed to Executive Session at 9:30 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Item 7(a): ORS 192.660(2)(e) – Real Property Transactions

The Astoria Development Commission will recess to executive session to discuss a real property transaction issue.

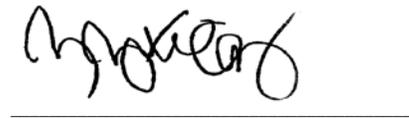
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 pm.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED


City Manager